Team Spirit

By Sharon Lee Riguzzi

As I am not a golfer, it was with more than just a little trepidation that I awaited the Fourth Annual West Point Charity Golf Outing. Organized by my husband, the event raises funds to assist soldiers’ families. Four of the helping hands belong to my kindhearted friend Cathy and yours truly. We were reassured by the organizer that, as recruits with most-favored status, we didn’t have to really understand the game. We just had to look and sound as though we did.

We were in charge of special events at the second hole. Cathy, up on the green, quickly mastered her role. With tape measure in hand, she won the complete respect of all the players. As for me, I hawked various activities and collected money. What do you think of my spiel: “Make sure you’re in for the fifty-fifty?” “Will you win closest to the pin?” “Five bucks a chance, right here? You can have a mulligan for another five bucks!”

Now, honestly, don’t I sound like I know what I’m talking about?

In between pitches I managed to take in some aspects of the game and learned that best-ball was the game being played. (Huh? I thought it was golf.) When I asked about best-ball, someone in the know explained: “Each player on a four-member team takes a turn hitting the ball. The team decides which of the four players had the best shot, and then all of the members move their balls to the location of the ‘best ball’ and hit again. And then the entire process gets repeated. See? So simple, a child can pick it right up!”

Hmmmmm. Well, I got the general idea. Basically everyone wanted their team to win, but camaraderie, not competition, was the order of the day. Everyone was having fun. People were cheering for one another and especially encouraging the beginners as they moved their not-so-perfect shots to a place right on the green (a place they probably had only seen before in their dreams). Eventually I deduced that one of the best things about best-ball is how it lets team members make the less-experienced golfers feel more at ease. Best-ball is a wonderful illustration of teamwork.

Looking back at the event, I am sure there were one or two golfers who weren’t real crazy about the best-ball arrangement; they would have preferred to claim their glory as individuals. But I wonder how many of us consider ourselves good team players in life?

My definition of a team player includes not being out for yourself and being able to share ideas and pitch in and work toward a common goal. A team player also is one who notices when someone else on the team is flagging and gives some extra assistance without being asked. It may well be possible that some people are natural team players. And of course there are some claiming the label who would be quite surprised to learn how others view their role as team player.

The good news is with a little effort we all can earn the team-planer title and help our teams to thrive. Getting started is easy:

* Recognize that so much more can be accomplished when we involve the whole group.
* Be aware of the variety of strengths in the team, and use them to full advantage.
* Share ideas and opinions, but once the team has a plan, embrace it.
* Encourage teammates.
* Pull a fair share of the load and, at times, even more than what’s fair.

These percepts can be applied to our professional lives – and work just as well with the group around our kitchen table or the circle of friends with whom we spend our free time. Everyone benefits from teamwork.

By the way, I’m looking for a foursome for next year’s outing. Anyone interested in being on my team? Only good team players need apply.

**Mini Mexican Layered Dips**

**Weight Watchers Recipe**

Ratings (3)

**3*PointsPlus***Value ~ 3

**Prep time:** 18 min

**Cook time:** 0 min

**Other time:** 0 min

**Serves**: 8

Here’s everyone’s favorite layered dip served in individual cups. It’s an adorable and genius way to avoid a messy dip bowl. Plus, it's built-in portion control.

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